



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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TRUMPETER SWAN POPULATION DROPS

The trumpeter swan population of the United States which mounted to a new high of 361 birds last year declined to 350 in 1947, Albert M. Day, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, revealed today.

Mr. Day attributed the decrease to illegal shooting and to the increased commercial and recreational development of lake areas in Montana and Idaho that were formerly used by the breeding birds.

The population figure of 350 swans is based on a census made in August of the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana, the Yellowstone National Park, and neighboring areas in Montana and Idaho by personnel of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. The count showed that 180 birds were on the Red Rock Lakes Refuge, a gain of 10 over 1946; 62 on the Yellowstone National Park, a gain of five over 1946; and the others were scattered over the adjacent nesting and resting areas of Montana and Idaho. The National Elk Refuge in Wyoming had six birds; the Malheur Refuge in Oregon recorded 27.

Covering the Red Rock Lakes Refuge and nearby areas by plane from August 12 to 14, Dr. Ward M. Sharp, refuge manager, counted a total of 49 cygnets on the refuge for a gain of three young over the 1946 count and three on adjacent Montana and Idaho lakes for a loss of 13 young from 1946.

Clutch numbers ran high on the refuge, according to Dr. Sharp, who earlier in the season found two nests containing seven eggs each, three nests with clutches of six eggs and two nests with five eggs each. One pair brought off seven young, Dr. Sharp observed.

Winter feeding of the swans began October 28, 1946, and continued twice weekly until April 11, 1947. During this period a total of 978 bushels of wheat and barley were fed and 160 swans were counted during the winter on the springheads where the feeding was done.

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